

March 30, 2020

## FAQs: Health, Safety and Travel during COVID-19 Response in Guatemala

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# **General Information about the situation in Guatemala during the COVID-19 crisis**

## **What restrictions are currently in place in Guatemala in response to COVID-19?**

Recently the Guatemalan government has taken expanded measures aimed at protecting the health and safety of all persons in Guatemala, including U.S. citizens. The U.S. Embassy requests that all U.S. citizens in Guatemala abide by the official policies of the Guatemalan government, and follow official updates by both the Guatemalan government and the U.S. Embassy.

Three of the official measures implemented by the Guatemalan government that impact U.S. citizens currently in Guatemala are explained here:

1. **The state of calamity** (Estado de calamidad)
2. **Closing of borders** (Cierre de fronteras)
3. **A national curfew** (Toque de queda)

### **State of Calamity (Estado de calamidad)**

The Guatemalan government declared a “state of calamity” on March 5<sup>th</sup> and then extended the expiration of this declaration to May 5<sup>th</sup>. Declaring a “state of calamity” allows the Guatemalan government to take exceptional measures to protect its national security (similar to a “state of emergency” in the United States). Under a state of calamity, the Guatemalan government can authorize specific actions, such as border closures and curfew (explained below). For updates related to the state of calamity, we refer you to the [Guatemalan government](#).

### **Closing of Borders (Cierre de fronteras)**

The Guatemalan government is currently barring entry to most non-Guatemalans (with certain specific exceptions for health and security) — by its land, sea, and air borders. The U.S. Embassy continues to work with the Guatemalan government to permit departure of certain flights for U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents from Guatemalan airspace to the United States. The Guatemalan government can adjust its policy on national border closings at any time. We refer you to the [Guatemalan government](#) for updated information on its national borders.

### **Curfew (Toque de queda)**

Under its declaration of a state of calamity, the Guatemalan government also instituted a nationwide curfew currently effective through April 12. The curfew lasts from 4:00 p.m. to 4:00 a.m. each day. Every individual in Guatemala — including U.S. citizens — is required to remain inside their domicile during curfew hours (with exceptions for health, security, and some

delivery services). The Guatemalan government may extend the deadline of the curfew at any time. The U.S. Embassy reminds U.S. citizens in Guatemala that they are expected to obey the curfew, which is being enforced by Guatemalan law enforcement. Violators of the curfew restrictions risk [arrest](#).

Check here for updates: [U.S. Embassy Guatemala COVID-19 updates](#)

More information available in the [Diario de Central America](#) (official government publication) or [Ministry of Governance](#) / [Min Gob. Facebook page](#)

### **Is a Curfew in effect in Guatemala? If so, what are the rules?**

The Government of Guatemala established a national curfew, effective March 24 to April 12. Every individual in Guatemala – including U.S. citizens – is required to remain inside their domicile between 4:00 pm and 4:00 am daily. Most businesses must close. There are exceptions for health, security, and some delivery services. The U.S. Embassy reminds U.S. citizens in Guatemala that they are expected to obey the curfew, which is being enforced by Guatemalan law enforcement. Violators of the curfew restriction risk [arrest](#).

Check here for updates: [U.S. Embassy Guatemala COVID-19 updates](#)

More information available in the [Diario de Central America](#) (official government publication) or [Ministry of Governance](#) / [Min Gob. Facebook page](#)

### **Are all borders and airports closed in Guatemala?**

Starting March 5th, the Government of Guatemala began taking steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19 by restricting travel to and from Guatemala. As of March 17, regular commercial flights were suspended. The Guatemalan government may reassess this decision at any time. Most land border are also closed but only Guatemalan authorities can provide the latest information.

Some commercial flights to the United States have resumed on a limited basis. The U.S. Embassy in Guatemala is coordinating with commercial carriers to facilitate additional commercial flights from Guatemala City to the United States. We urge U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents wishing to travel to the United States to contact [these airlines](#) **directly** and immediately to make a booking. Please note, prices are set by the carriers, not the U.S. government. Please do **\*not\*** contact the U.S. Embassy to make a reservation. Please also continue to monitor U.S. Embassy online accounts ([Website](#) / [Twitter](#) / [Facebook](#)) for updated information. More info on [commercial carrier options](#).

The Government of Guatemala is the authority that determines entry and exit from the country. We refer you to the links below for the most recent information.

Check here for information about entering and exit Guatemala: <http://igm.gob.gt>

Check here for updates: [Government of Guatemala](#)

Check here for updates: [U.S. Embassy Guatemala COVID-19 updates](#)

### **Can I travel by land within Guatemala?**

Public transport is under severe restriction. Some public transport operators have permission from the Government of Guatemala to travel. Land travel by personal vehicle and private transportation services (shuttles, taxis, ride-share services, etc.) during non-curfew hours is currently permitted. For specific questions about safety and viability of land travel, contact the [Guatemalan Agency for Tourist Assistance \(PROATUR\)](#) at (502) 2421 2810.

There are reports that some local Guatemalan communities are taking unofficial action to restrict individuals from entering or exiting their communities in an attempt to prevent the spread of COVID-19. In some cases, non-Guatemalan citizens have been prevented from entering or leaving a community — or upon leaving, are not allowed to return. Several reports in this regard have come from communities surrounding Lake Atitlán. If any U.S. citizen feels they are in danger, they should call Guatemalan law enforcement at 120, 122, or 123 (the equivalent of “911” in the United States) and the U.S. Embassy (+502-2326-4000) to report the situation. For more information and updates, please call the Guatemalan tourism police at 1500 or visit the [Guatemalan Tourist Authority](#).

### **Can I travel by Air within Guatemala?**

You can find information about domestic flight availability and airports through the [Guatemalan Agency for Civil Aviation \(DGAC\)](#). Please remember that all travel, including travel to and from airports to homes or hotels, would have to occur outside of curfew hours (currently 4pm to 4am until April 12)

### **Where can I find information about international flights to/from Guatemala?**

Although international flights are currently not operating normally, information can be found at the [Guatemalan Agency for Civil Aviation \(DGAC\)](#)

### **Should I try to cross into Mexico and fly to U.S. from there?**

The Guatemalan government is currently allowing foreign travelers to exit via land border crossing into Mexico, and Mexico is currently allowing them to enter. Some private tour operators are operating buses to these border crossings. Many travelers have also taken private taxis or other methods of transport to the Mexican border.

The U.S. Embassy does not recommend this option as it is not guaranteed that traveling by land out of Guatemala will result in successful return to the United States, or that it is safe to do so. For the past year embassy personnel have not been allowed to conduct personal travel in Huehuetenango or San Marcos (where the Tecun Uman border crossing is located) due to security concerns. Additionally, given the fluid nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, border passage and flight availability in Mexico could change at any time. All travelers considering exiting Guatemala by land should research travel and security advisories (available at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)) for all portions of their planned route, as well as the CDC's COVID-19 country health guides (available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/map-and-travel-notice.html>).

### **Where can I find all alerts published by the U.S. Embassy in Guatemala related to the COVID-19 crisis?**

<https://gt.usembassy.gov/alert-covid-19/>

Visit our Embassy website <https://gt.usembassy.gov>,  
Twitter <http://twitter.com/usembassyguate> and  
Facebook <http://facebook.com/embajada.eeuu.guatemala> accounts.

### **Where can I find health information about COVID-19?**

For health information see: [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov)

To find resources in Guatemala see [Ministry of Health](#)  
[General Medical Info/](#) [List of public hospitals](#)

### **If I go back to the U.S. will I be quarantined?**

Visit the [Department of Homeland Security](#) and [Department of Health and Human Services](#) for the latest information for individuals entering the United States.

## **Information about air travel options not coordinated by the Department of State**

The U.S. Embassy in Guatemala is coordinating with commercial carriers to facilitate additional commercial flights from Guatemala City to the United States. We urge U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents wishing to travel to the United States to contact [these airlines](#) **directly** and immediately to make a booking. Please note, prices are set by the carriers, not the U.S. government. Please do **\*not\*** contact the U.S. Embassy to make a reservation. Please also continue to monitor U.S. Embassy online accounts ([Website / Twitter / Facebook](#)) for updated information.

Check for updates on [commercial carrier options](#).

## **Information about Charter Flights organized by the Department of State**

### **Is the U.S. Embassy organizing charter flights for U.S. citizens?**

There are two (2) [charter flights organized by the U.S. Embassy](#) scheduled for Tuesday, March 31.

The flights from La Aurora airport in Guatemala City to Dallas-Ft. Worth (DFW) airport are operated by American Airlines. We also urge travelers to continue to check the availability of commercial flight options and make their way to Guatemala City to ensure they do not miss their flight.

From March 23-30, the U.S. Embassy in Guatemala coordinated 10 charter flights, from La Aurora airport to Dallas/Fort Worth, evacuating over 1,300 U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents. These government-coordinated charter flights were fully booked. We do not know when commercial flights will resume in Guatemala but urge travelers to continue to check the availability of commercial and private charter flight options. See above section.

**\*\*PLEASE NOTE\*\*** The U.S. Embassy has revised the process to submit requests from U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents wishing to pursue U.S. government-coordinated flight options. We have done this to streamline the process for manifesting passenger lists and to resolve some technical challenges that were slowing down our ability to inform passengers.

We kindly ask that you submit your information using the link below **even if you contacted the Embassy previously to provide your information** and submit a separate form for each

passenger. We realize this is an inconvenience for those who have already submitted their data previously, but it is necessary so that we can best serve your needs.

Please submit your information via this link: <https://bit.ly/2UzOwFH>

[Alerts for U.S citizens](#) related to COVID-19.

### **Who pays for Department of State charter flights and how much do they cost?**

Under U.S. law, passengers on a U.S. government-organized charter flight are responsible for paying the cost of their ticket, which may be higher than standard commercial fares. You must sign a [promissory note](#) before boarding, which you then must pay back to the State Department after returning to the United States. No cash or credit card payments will be accepted at the airport. You will be responsible for any arrangements or costs (lodging, onward destination or local transportation, etc.) beyond your initial destination in the United States. Exact departure time and routing are subject to change.

The current estimate for flights from Guatemala City is \$605, but this could change. Travelers do not incur any debt for the flight until they physically sign the promissory note at the airport.

### **How can I sign up for a charter flight coordinated by the Department of State?**

The U.S. Embassy has revised the process to submit requests from U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents wishing to pursue U.S. government-coordinated flight options. We have done this to streamline the process for manifesting passenger lists and to resolve some technical challenges that were slowing down our ability to inform passengers.

We kindly ask that you submit your information using the link below even if you contacted the Embassy previously to provide your information and submit a separate form for each passenger. We realize this is an inconvenience for those who have already submitted their data previously, but it is necessary so that we can best serve your needs.

In order to communicate your interest, please submit your information via this link:  
<https://bit.ly/2UzOwFH>

Each traveler should submit their information individually (one form per passenger). Parents/guardians should submit one form for each child that will be accompanying them, and note their relationship in the “Special Considerations” box in the form.

Please do not send a separate email to the U.S. Embassy in Guatemala to confirm that this form is received.

When you get a confirmation email, **PLEASE SEND A MESSAGE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE** to [AmcitsGuatemala@state.gov](mailto:AmcitsGuatemala@state.gov) to confirm that you will be present to board your flight that day.

**\*\*If your plans change or you do not intend to travel on the flight for which you have received confirmation, please notify the Embassy immediately at [AmcitsGuatemala@state.gov](mailto:AmcitsGuatemala@state.gov) so that your seat confirmation may be provided to another traveler.\*\***

### **How will the U.S. Embassy in Guatemala communicate with me?**

The only emails the U.S. Embassy will use for communication regarding charter flights are those ending in “[@state.gov](mailto:@state.gov).”

The U.S. Embassy will respond to you via email with requests for any additional information, as well as confirmed bookings. **It is essential that you read your confirmed booking information carefully to ensure that all travelers are listed by name.** Anyone who does not receive a booking confirmation with their name on it will not be allowed to board.

Please be informed that the Embassy is working diligently to register all eligible requests and will be in touch with you if there are questions about your submission and/or to confirm that you are booked on a flight.

When you get a confirmation email, **PLEASE SEND A MESSAGE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE** to [AmcitsGuatemala@state.gov](mailto:AmcitsGuatemala@state.gov) to confirm that you will be present to board your flight that day.

**\*\*If your plans change or you do not intend to travel on the flight for which you have received confirmation, please notify the Embassy immediately at [AmcitsGuatemala@state.gov](mailto:AmcitsGuatemala@state.gov) so that your seat confirmation may be provided to another traveler.\*\***

### **Who gets a seat on these charter flights?**

Available spaces for U.S. government-coordinated flights will be prioritized for U.S. citizens and their eligible family members (including those with identified health concerns), legal permanent residents of the United States, and then others as seats may become available.



### **Should I wait at the airport in Guatemala City to board a charter flight organized by the U.S. Embassy?**

The U.S. Embassy urges any interested travelers \*NOT\* to arrive at La Aurora airport in Guatemala City until they have received an official communication from the U.S. Embassy with confirmed flight details and booking. You will not be permitted to enter the airport to board a U.S. government charter flight without confirmation from the U.S. Embassy of a seat on the flight.

### **Should I try to book a flight on a non-U.S. government charter flight?**

See section above.

### **I am currently outside of Guatemala City. When should I plan to travel?**

Since flights may occur on short notice and all flights will depart from La Aurora airport in Guatemala City, we urge eligible travelers who are currently outside of the Guatemala City metro area to immediately travel to Guatemala City. Your travel must comply with the curfew requirements set by the Government of Guatemala (you must remain inside between 4pm and 4am daily). Remember that public transportation is suspended, so you should explore private options such as shuttles or ride-share options to travel to Guatemala City.

### **Are there any health screenings?**

Travelers seeking transport on charter flights coordinated by the Department of State will not be permitted to travel if they are exhibiting flu-like symptoms and should not come to the airport. These individuals should self-quarantine and seek medical attention if their symptoms worsen. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>.

We understand this may represent a significant hardship, but it is necessary for the health and safety of all travelers on the flight.

Visit the [Department of Homeland Security](#) and [Department of Health and Human Services](#) for information on health screening upon entering the United States.

### **What luggage is permitted on the U.S. Embassy organized charter flight?**

Travelers are advised that they are allowed one checked bag (max. weight 50 lbs.), one carry-on bag, and one personal item.

## **Will pets be permitted on the U.S. Embassy organized charter flight?**

Unfortunately, we are unable to accommodate pets and emotional support animals. SERVICE ANIMALS will be permitted with proper documentation. Travelers must coordinate directly with American Airlines upon arrival at the airport at least three hours before departure.

## **Resources**

### **Where can I get more information?**

Visit our Embassy website <https://gt.usembassy.gov>,

Check here for updates: [U.S. Embassy Guatemala COVID-19 updates](#)

Twitter <http://twitter.com/usembassyguate> and

Facebook <http://facebook.com/embajada.eeuu.guatemala> accounts.

Review the State Department's Global Level 4 Health Travel Advisory at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov).

### [What the Department of State Can and Cannot do during a crisis](#)

Consult the [CDC](#) website for the most up-to-date information. For the most recent information on what you can do to reduce your risk of contracting COVID-19 please see the [CDC's latest recommendations](#).

Visit the [COVID-19 crisis page on travel.state.gov](#) for the latest information.

Check with your airlines, cruise lines, or travel operators regarding any updated information about your travel plans and/or restrictions.

Visit the [Department of Homeland Security](#) website on the latest travel restrictions to the U.S.

Monitor local news for updates.

### **Where do I find information published by the Government of Guatemala?**

GOBIERNO DE GUATEMALA (Information in Spanish)

Official Government of Guatemala website

Website: <https://www.guatemala.gob.gt/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/guatemalagob/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/GuatemalaGob>

PROATUR (Tourist Assistance Program) (information in English)

Tourist assistance program through the Guatemalan Official Tourism Agency **INGUAT**

Phone: 1500 / 2421-2810

Website: <http://proatur.visitguatemala.com/en/about-proatur.php>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/VisitGuatemala>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/visitguatemala>

INGUAT (information in Spanish)

Official Tourism Agency

Phone: 1517 / 1540

Website: <http://inguat.gob.gt/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/inguat/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/InguatPrensa>

Ministry of Government

Website: <https://mingob.gob.gt/>

Phone: 1517 / 1540

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/mingobguate/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/mingobguate>